

MR. NANENG: Good morning. Waqaa, which means "hello." Quyaná for the opportunity to speak, and thank you for the opportunity. My name is Myron Naneng, Sr. I'm the president of the Association of Village Council Presidents, which represents 56 tribes, federally recognized tribes, in the Yukon Kuskokwim-Delta in Alaska, the size of a region of both the State of Washington and Oregon combined. There is over 25,000 Yup'ik and Cup'ik and Denaina Athabascans in those villages. We have populations of some of the villages as low as 10 to people even though there are many tribal members that don't live in those villages up to the biggest village of Bethel, which is the hub for the region. We have many issues that we deal with up in Alaska. We are glad that Alaska is going to be included in the Farm Bill.

Because there is many things that we need to see and be recognized as part of the first Americans, the first nation people in the U.S. that we call the United States. We are not foreigners, but sometimes we feel that people come to a region saying that they have a program to offer, but they never share that information. There is no outreach. I have tried for the last six months to visit with an NRCS representative there in Bethel, to sit down and meet with him, to talk about some of the issues that we need to deal with. The only communications that I have gotten back is, "I'll get back with you whenever I have time." Yet they are already talking to other organizations that don't have any lead based representation that our tribes have or villages have. We have 12 regions up in Alaska federally recognized under Alaska Native Claim Settlement Act. Each region has a unique cultural difference, and these 12 regions should be recognized also under the Farm Bill because they do have resources that they are managing for their people.

Let me give you an example of one village that recently has for centuries relied on the caribou migrating through the village or near the village. Because of the way that the state has managed the caribou hunting of those herds, the caribou that is usually allowed, the first herd of caribou that's usually allowed to pass through that pass, weren't allowed to pass because of the hunters, sports hunters from Anchorage, Fairbanks, and even out of state, and even from foreign countries. They did not allow not even a single caribou to get by that village that has relied on that herd for centuries as its meat resource. What happened was that because that did not happen, another village stepped in and helped them provide that meat in the village of Anaktuvuk. It's up north. Our people on the grounds in our villages have been responsible for many of the resources that not only stay there in Alaska but also migrate down to the Lower 48 and for that matter for the rest of the world like the migratory birds.

My village of Hooper Bay has been approached by the federal government, US Fish and Wildlife Service, to establish a conservation easement on the lands that we own, 32,000 acres. It's a prime nesting ground of migratory birds that nest there and they migrate out throughout the world for that matter. That's why we are concerned about the avian flu because some of these birds go down to south at least Asia where a lot of headlines have said that there is some people affected by the avian flu. And some of these migratory birds do affect the farm lands here in the Lower 48. We have been working with Washington and Oregon and California farm bureaus to try to find a way to help address some of their issues that are being impacted by what they call the goose depredation issue. In the villages, too, our people pay the highest fuel prices.

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We talk about having a lot of oil up in Alaska. But in some of our villages, if you are paying \$6 per gallon for gasoline, \$5 a gallon for heating fuel, it really has a big impact on our people that have to live there in the village. And when we take a look at the news on CNN or MSNBC, the highest fuel price in the US that they're talking about may only be about \$2.55, and people in our villages would be more than happy to pay that amount, if it's \$2.55 as compared to \$6 per gallon. And because of some of the transportation issues that we have in our villages not all the fuel is delivered to sustain a village through the winter. So if it's flown into a village, the price of fuel doubles. Has anybody in the U.S. ever heard about paying \$12 a gallon for gasoline, \$10 a gallon for heating fuel?

You know, that's how much impact in the state that provides quite a large percentage of fuel for the nation that we are being impacted by that. Plus a lot of people probably don't realize that many of our villages are not connected by road. A few years ago there was a lady that come from New York asking to visit one of the villages that is only 15 miles from Bethel, and asked, "Can we can drive to that village." I said, "The only way we are going to get there is in a small Cessna airplane, a 207." And she never did her research that the only way that we got to that village is by flying only 15 miles away. She didn't realize that we could not hop into a car, drive to that village which was 15 miles away, and she wanted to be back a couple of hours later. But more often or not, you rely on the good Lord because of the weather. You rely on the airline companies that have to schedule their flights. And thankfully we made it back to Bethel that same day, which was about six hours later after she had wanted to be back.

But I do invite all of you to come up to Alaska to see the situation that many of our people live in, and I think that you'll have a better sense of why we are asking to be part of the Farm Bill. And once again I like to say quiana for the opportunity, thank you for the opportunity to speak. And if you have an opportunity to come to Alaska, we can also take you on our ice highway river system that we drive during the wintertime when the ice is about three to four feet thick, and they might even want to put you on a hover craft that operates year round, takes up to a couple of seasons during freezing and break up. We invite you to come up to Alaska and you'll see the situation. Otherwise, when we talk about it, it seems you'll scratch your cheek and say, "I wonder if he is telling the truth." But, honestly, we invite you up there. Thank you.

MR. RACINE: Joel, I believe you were next there, and then I'll take Spencer back there.